

Capital: Bratislava

Language: Slovak (official), Hungarian, Ruthenian, and Ukrainian

Religions: Roman Catholic 69%, Protestant 9%, Greek Catholic 4%, Orthodox 0.9%, other 0.6%, unknown 3.5%, 13% report no affiliation

Population: 5,379,455 (May 2001 census)

Population Below National Poverty Level: Not Available

GDP(current U.S.\$): \$20,462 million

GDP per capita (purchasing power parity): \$62 billion

GDP per capita (current U.S.\$): \$3,804

President: Rudolf Schuster

Prime Minister: Mikulas Dzurinda

Ambassador to the U.S.: Martin Butora



National Interest: Parliamentary elections in September 2002 sustained Slovakia's nascent democracy and contributed to regional stability, resulting in an invitation to join the European Union in 2004. The Government of Slovakia is making strong efforts to join NATO, and has behaved as a de facto ally in a number of crises. Slovak military and observers participate in various peacekeeping operations, including in Bosnia and Kosovo.

OVERVIEW OF USAID'S FOCUS IN SLOVAKIA

FY 03: Total AEEB - \$.3 million, USAID Total - \$.24 million (FY 02 Carryover)

The USAID Mission to Slovakia closed September 30, 2000. It was recognized, however, that Slovakia needed continued, targeted assistance for a limited period to ensure that political and economic reform was consolidated. A robust post-presence program included anticorruption/transparency activities, democracy/civil society activities, municipal economic development work, and education reform activities.

For the September 2002 Parliamentary elections, additional AEEB funding was provided for a large number of activities managed by U.S. grantees and implemented by Slovak nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and political parties. When USAID pre-election activities began in March 2002, polling suggested that turnout would be about 50%. The final result was 70% turnout. The assistance was designed to target certain voter groups. In general, these were younger voters (first and second time), the more urban and modern thinking (voters of change), and women. The NGO and political party get out the vote campaigns were well targeted and more sophisticated than in earlier elections. The turnout among the pro-reform voters was 80-85%, and a local think tank reported that urban turnout was higher than rural for the first time since the revolution.

USAID's office in Bratislava is once again closing, this time on March 31, 2003. However, Slovakia as a post-presence country will continue to benefit from USAID regional programs managed by the Regional Services Center (RSC) in Budapest or by USAID/Washington. Recognizing that corruption in the government, judiciary and regulatory entities continues to be an impediment to foreign direct investment, limited AEEB funds have been secured. These funds continue anti-corruption/transparency activities already underway through ABA/CEELI, Transparency International Slovakia, and Department of Justice/CEELI.

In addition, Slovakia is eligible to participate in the Roma Community Support Program (RCSP) currently under procurement. Through this activity, Roma Community Centers in Slovakia will be provided grants to expand their education, training, job placement, and other programs. Participation in the Local Government Information Network (LOGIN) continues. LOGIN serves as a local government information clearinghouse. The NGO partnership grants activity is operational as a legacy mechanism in Slovakia and other Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) graduate countries.

Established in 1991, the Czech and Slovak-American Enterprise Fund is a private, non-profit U.S. corporation. During 1996, it was decided that the Fund would focus all new activities exclusively in the Slovak Republic. Providing technical assistance through knowledge transfer and training, the Fund aims to strengthen an enterprise's ability to achieve sustainable economic growth and increase its competitive advantage in the free market. To date the Fund has committed approximately \$29.8 million in debt and equity to 42 private Slovak enterprises through its Direct Investments program.